



## Social Science Research Dissertation Checklist

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All items in this checklist must be formatted correctly according to the current edition of the Southern Seminary Manual of Style.

Please review the following items and ensure your defense ready submission complies with these items. Your signature is required at the end of this document.

**NOTE: A SIGNED COPY OF THIS DOCUMENT IS REQUIRED WITH EACH DOCUMENT SUBMISSION.**

### PRELIMINARIES

Blank Front Cover Page (required, not counted, not numbered)

Copyright Page (required, not counted, not numbered)

Title Page (required, counted, not numbered—the title should be 15 words or less—degree is Doctor of Education or Doctor of Philosophy—date is the month day and year of the prospectus defense, or month day and year of graduation on the final copy)

Approval Page (required, counted, not numbered)

Dedication Page (optional, counted, not numbered)

Table of Contents (required, counted, numbered—accurate page identification required)

List of Abbreviations (required if used, counted, numbered—acronyms used)

List of Tables (required if used, counted, numbered—tabular data)

List of Figures (required if used, counted, numbered—figures, pictures, charts)

Preface (required, counted, numbered—helpful persons and sources, including copyright permissions and acknowledgment of dissertation committee members)

### CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH CONCERN

Introduction to the Research Problem (identification of the concerns generating the research problem. Clearly indicate how the proposed study will contribute significant to the existing literature)—at least one paragraph of text must separate this level of heading from the chapter title.

Research Purpose(SSR) / Thesis(HR) – a statement of why the study is being done.

Research Questions (specific lines of inquiry, sub-problems)

Research Hypotheses (Quantitative Research Designs Only) –these should be written as tentative propositions set forth to guide the consideration of the research questions. Do not write these as null hypotheses. Use the null hypothesis to guide statistical analysis only. State these as your educated guess as to the outcome of your study.

Delimitations of the Study (intentional limitations in the scope of the research design and the subsequent limitations to the generalization of findings)

Terminology (definitions of key terms or terms used in unique or specific forms—to format, use normal paragraph indentation; place the term in italics followed by a period, appropriate

spacing, and then the definition in normal font and double-spaced; organize terms in alphabetical order)

Research Assumptions (acknowledgment of viewpoints, necessary biases, significant theoretical precedents, and any other influences foundational to the validity of the study)

Procedural Overview (a brief synopsis of the research design)

## **CHAPTER 2: PRECEDENT LITERATURE**

Theological Underpinnings of the Study (primary and secondary sources of theological issues, beliefs, and concerns relevant to the study—do not use Theological Underpinnings of the Study as a level of heading)—at least one paragraph of text must separate the level of heading from the chapter title PRECEDENT LITERATURE

Theoretical Underpinnings of the Study (primary and secondary sources of educational and leadership theories and practices relevant to the study—do not use Theoretical Underpinnings of the Study as a level of heading)

Profile of the Current Study (synopsis of the proposed research design and how it is shaped by the significant literature)

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN**

Research Question Synopsis (Include problem, purpose, and research questions and hypotheses)

Research Design Overview (basic research design summarized)

Population(s) (all the members of a real or hypothetical set of people)

Samples and Delimitations (the subset of the population used in the current study, the methods used to select the samples, and the intentional limitations used in determining the sample from the population)

Limitations of Generalization (limitations in generalizing the data from the sample back to the whole population)

Research Method, Instrumentation (data collecting instrumentation, e.g., surveys, interview questions, etc., and the measures used to validate the instrumentation and demonstrate its reliability of—all instruments must be approved by the Dissertation Committee and Research Ethics Committee before use in data collection)

Research Procedures (step-by-step protocol used in gathering data this is to be detailed enough for someone to replicate the study)—this level of heading may be replaced with more descriptive level of headings as appropriate to the research design

## **CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS**

Compilation Protocol (how data was compiled for analysis and the statistical measures applied to the data, including a description of the research variables studied and statistical methods employed in their analysis)—at least one paragraph of text must separate this level of heading from the chapter title ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Demographic and Sample Data

Findings and Displays By Research Question (objective description and analysis of data with appropriate tables and illustrations with multiple subsections used as necessary to organize

the data clearly and logically by research question)—this level of heading may be replaced with more descriptive level of headings as appropriate to the analysis of the research findings  
Evaluation of the Research Design (reflective analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the current methodology)

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS**

Research Purpose (verbatim restatement from chapter one)—at least one paragraph of text must separate this level of heading from the chapter title CONCLUSIONS

Research Implications (impact issues to beliefs, theories, practices, etc. generated by the research findings attempt to connect implications to precedent literature and organized logically but not necessarily by research question)

Research Applications (subjective proposed outcomes as a result of the findings organized logically but not necessarily by research question)

Research Limitations (Clearly state any limitations on how this data should be interpreted and how findings should not be misunderstood.)

Further Research (additional research designs that could or need to be explored as a result of the current study and modifications that could enhance the replication of the current design)

## **REFERENTIALS**

Appendix (appendix as required, counted, numbered—samples of instruments used to collect data, illustrations and tables relevant to the study but too extensive to but in the body of the document, examples of materials needed to replicate the study, etc.)

Reference List (required, counted, numbered—significant resources to the study and referenced resources in the study)

Abstract (required, not counted, not numbered—synopsis of research—do not use “In chapter 1 . . .” phrasing, and save half of length for analysis of findings and conclusions)

Vita (required, not counted, not numbered—short sketch of the credentials of the author—do not include the doctoral degree)

Blank Back Cover Page (required, not counted, not numbered)

## **DIFFERENCES IN THE PROSPECTUS AND FINAL DISSERTATION**

Prospectus is written in the future tense with data gathering pending and instrumentation in process—preliminaries and chapters 1-3 essentially complete, chapters 4-5 (proposed content) and referentials (partially complete)

Prospectus chapter length approximately 75-95 pages—preliminaries and referentials will increase this page amount (approximate page counts: chapter 1—15; chapter 2—35 – 50 (some topics may require more); chapter 3—15; chapter 4—8-10; and chapter 5—5)

Chapter 4 of the prospectus must include detail on how the data will be compiled; must detail what statistical measures will be used in analyzing the data with a clear description of how the statistical measures function and why they were chosen; must include the general layout of the chapter in order to demonstrate how the student plans on organizing the findings; a few tables/figures should be included to demonstrate how the student is planning to display the findings.

Chapter 5 of the prospectus should include the basic structure required for the final dissertation (i.e. headings with introductory statements).

Prospectus copies on standard paper

Dissertation is written in the past tense with data gathering completed and compiled—all preliminaries, chapters, and referentials completed

Dissertation length no more than 300 pages

Defense copies of dissertation on standard paper

Dissertation final copies on acid-free or 100% cotton bond paper

PDF copy of the final edition of the dissertation

By signing below, the student acknowledges that if the document submitted does not satisfy the above checklist, the document may not be accepted for a hearing.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed Name

Dissertation

Prospectus

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Date